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ABSTRACT

Some of the reasons for adopting contract learning and some strategies used at Empire State College, the University of South Carolina, and Wilmington College, are useful in aiding the adoption of new ways of teaching and learning. Several useful strategies are: (1) launch a committee to study local goals and needs; (2) connect the group and concerned outsiders to evidence about local conditions and to external knowledge resources; (3) seek and sustain support at the top of the institution but broadly involve faculty; (4) persuade persons whose support is needed by personal interaction; (5) develop advisory groups; (6) seek external funding to get things started, but switch to stable internal support as quickly as possible; (7) recruit leaders and faculty who understand the program; (8) carefully evaluate contract learning experiences, outcomes and related costs; (9) provide orientation and professional development opportunities for those who must assume the new roles; (10) provide reasonable workload and suitable rewards for mentoring functions; (11) set up mechanisms to disseminate innovation; (12) establish renewal units such as planning committees, research officers, faculty development centers, policy analysis and planning officers. (Author/KE)

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IMPLEMENTING CONTRACT LEARNING INNOVATION PROCESS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Introduction

In order to adopt new ways of teaching and learning, people must feel a need to change old ways. (Hassinger, 1959) Then that need must be connected to a new teaching-learning method which promises to resolve that concern. (Rodgers and Shoemaker, 1971) But it is not enough to desire change and to have a desirable innovation at hand. People will not risk leaving the status quo unless they feel they have the resources to pull off a change. (Gamson, 1968) They must believe they have or can get the influence, the skill, the time, the materials and facilities, the money, the personal rewards. In higher education, these "people" include formal authorities - Faculty Senators, executive administrators, trustees. They include such funding sources as students and parents, legislators, foundations and donors. But particularly, because of the considerable academic autonomy professors have and the necessity for any teaching innovation to have professorial commitment, these "people" are the faculty.

If contract learning seems promising to you - and it certainly does to this observer of its implementation in several colleges and universities - the task before you is to broaden the recognition of need, the interest in this solution, and the belief that it is possible, among authorities, supporters and faculty alike. That is no small chore. To aid that task, this paper shares some of the reasons for adopting contract learning and some of the strategies employed at Empire State College, the University of Alabama, the University of South Carolina, and Wilmington College.*

*Information for this essay is derived from case histories developed for the Strategies for Change and Knowledge Utilization Project on South Carolina and Wilmington, from data of the Office of Research and Evaluation, Empire State College, and from Neal Berte's thoughtful essay about New College (Berte, 1972).

The Need for Contract Learning

Contract learning means that a student develops he-r learning program in collaboration with a "mentor" or small committee instead of by following a series of requirements laid out in the catalog. The student and some part of the faculty negotiate a contract. In institutions such as South Carolina and Wilmington, that contract covers a whole degree program and most contract experiences are traditional classes taught by established departments. In places such as Empire State, contracts are developed every few months and include a wide range of learning experiences but particularly independent study. Why change from set curriculum and degree requirements to the individual learning contract? At least four needs find solutions in this mode: 1) the logistical problems of working, married adults; 2) strong motivation to learn what one needs or wants to learn; 3) concern to develop intellectual skills and life-long learning habits; and 4) desire to individualize and personalize learning.

First, most contract learning students are older than the traditional eighteen to twenty-two. At Empire State, 63% are married. Sixty percent work full-time, and only 3% say they are unemployed. When asked why they enrolled at Empire State, the most frequent responses were that the flexibility and independence were especially attractive. Students could keep their jobs and often use those jobs as learning laboratories. The same for taking care of the kids and spouse. As the postsecondary population bulge gets older, this need to provide learning opportunities which can occur around and in adult responsibilities will increase. (Weathersby, 1974) Incidentally, Empire State students are also very interested in gaining credit for what is often impressive informal learning. Assessment of prior learning is controversial and need not be part of a contract learning program, but if your need is to serve adult students well, it should be considered.

Second, it is no secret by now, although many academic practices do not reflect the fact, that people learn best what they want to learn, what makes sense as useful to them. If you required thirty-five year old humanities professors to pass physics and accounting, you would have rebellion on your hands. Yet the average age of Empire State students is about the same as the faculty's, mid-thirties. Nor are eighteen year-olds eager to learn subjects in which they have no interest.

Contract learning students say that a strong attraction of this approach is that they can build learning programs reflective of their own interests, and 65% of Empire State students have quite clear learning objectives in mind when they first enroll. That does not mean students will end up with very narrow programs which avoid tough or foreign subjects or learning experiences which do not seem immediately practical and relevant. That can happen and is a problem state education officials identified at Empire State. But the solution is akin to governance problems. Do you decree how faculty will spend their time and be rewarded, confident that they'll like it once they try it? Sounds like another rebellion to me. Persuasion research consistently finds that personal interaction with respected others is the best way to slowly move individuals from one view to another, one behavior to another. (Rosnow and Robinson, 196 .) Coercion works as long as you have power over another, but its effect greatly diminishes when control is released (i.e. graduation). Mentors or small committees, in the course of building a personal relationship with a student, can nudge he-r out of narrow interests into related but broader learning so that motivation to learn accompanies liberal exposure. Institutions or individual faculty members plagued by students who do not seem interested in anything being taught would do well to try the contract approach.

A third need has been consistently expressed by faculty members who have completed the Institutional Goals Inventory. (Peterson, 1973.) They feel

that preparation of students in academic subjects is highly important but fairly successfully accomplished. Developing intellectual skill - problem solving, scientific inquiry, learning how to learn, developing habits of life-long learning - is rated even higher but is regarded as far less effectively accomplished. One reason may be that traditional teaching methods emphasize the professor's giving information and the student's listening, note-taking, memorizing and feeding back on tests. (Chickering, 1972) Table 1, however, reveals that Empire State students spend most of their study time in the "higher" mental activities: analysis, synthesis, evaluation and application. The recurrent conferences between mentor and student, the constant application of book learning to work or family, the field assignments, and the emphasis on self-evaluation of learning probably are some of the reasons for this much different emphasis. The sharp boundaries between "real life" and the classroom disappear. Contract learning, therefore, appears to be an attractive alternative for the many faculty, administrators and students who wish to do a better job at intellectual development.

Yet a fourth need to which this innovation speaks is the problem faculty increasingly face as admissions become more open; a class with an enormous range in interests, skills, learning styles, learning rates, and the self-confidence each student needs to do the work. Audio-Tutorial, the Personalized System of Instruction, and Computer Assisted Instruction are ways to individualize learning rate and to give attention to skill and self-confidence. But they tend to be limited to covering a subject determined by the professor as well as by limitations of standardized design and costly, sometimes uncooperative machines. (House, 1974) The learning contract, because it is a human interaction with as much flexibility in adapting to individual needs as a professor can

Table 1.

Learning Contract Mental Activities

Activity	Time Spent: "A Great Deal" or "Almost all my Time"	
	Number	Percent
Memorizing - learning specific things, ideas, methods so that you can remember them pretty much in the same form which you encountered them.	68	14
Analyzing - breaking down an experience or theory into its basic elements (e.g., examining a particular case or situation in depth and mastering its content)	372	77
Synthesizing	382	79
Evaluating	302	63
Applying	311	64

have at a one-to-one level, has great potential for personalizing learning. It still requires a professor who can respond to widely divergent interests, skills, styles, rates, and self-concepts. Contract learning faculty do find the role extremely complex and demanding. But, as Empire State evidence reveals, it can be done.

Likely Support and Resistance to Contract Learning

You may feel needs such as those at your institution, but even if you are the president, that is not enough to implement such a major change in curriculum and teaching behavior. Support by authorities, funding sources, and especially faculty will be needed. Before charging ahead, therefore, it might be wise to list the kinds of support and resistance you might expect from these groups. Below is my own perspective drawn from the few institutions I have watched as they considered contract learning.

One source of support would be persons worried about enrollment. The expanding postsecondary market is among adult students. Contract learning programs do attract all the students they can handle. State officials, business officers, and even faculty concerned about personnel cutbacks might be expected at least to lend an ear to this potential enrollment aid. A second source of support should come from persons who value personalized education. Student-oriented faculty, counselors, teachers struggling with diverse classes should be interested. Students themselves rate their own personal and intellectual development very important (Peterson, 1973), so they too should be attracted to the idea. Third, most faculty can be expected to show some interest in evidence that this approach emphasizes intellectual development, although they are sure to debate whether the little memorizing shown on Table 1 is healthy. Fourth, persons generally interested in the education of adults, such as continuing education staff, might be supportive as long as they feel included.

The negative side of the ledger on contract learning is likely to be much stronger, initially, than the positive side. Administrators and funding sources might like the enrollment possibilities but will need much convincing that the costs of all that personal attention will not be astronomical. Debus's assessment of Empire State costs becomes vital data. Alternatives such as South Carolina's and Wilmington's, which do not include frequent mentor contact nor development of new learning resources, may become necessary in the beginning, although the strength of ongoing mentor-student interaction is sacrificed. Certainly a key factor will be the extent to which such a program can tap existing learning resources, facilities, and personnel and can maintain a mentor-student ratio close to that of traditional arrangements.

More worrisome than costs to faculty and credentialing agencies will be academic quality, the depth, breadth and degree of learning. At South Carolina, the faculty became so suspicious of the quality of University Without Walls contracts that they eliminated the program. In contrast, the contract-based Bachelor of General Studies program relied on courses and grades in academic departments It took a conservative academic posture, published evidence of high grade achievement by BGS students, and earned thereby the support of the Faculty Senate's watchdog committee. Empire State's non-traditional learning practices and evaluation procedures received close scrutiny by the Middle States team, but they did grant accreditation, enthusiastically, in the College's first application. It is possible, therefore, to meet traditional concerns about academic quality with non-traditional means. But, as slow faculty acceptance of Individualized Educational Planning at Wilmington indicates, it is a continuing obstacle toward which persuasive evidence must constantly be directed.

A third source of resistance can be inter-unit competition. Despite Empire State's attraction of a student body quite different than that at other

State University of New York campuses, there has been anxiety that their enrollments will suffer as Empire State's gain. At South Carolina, departments keep a wary eye on BGS enrollments even though all the FTE credit goes to the departments in which BGS students take their courses. One departmental argument is that BGS students can avoid normally required courses (no specific courses are required of them) and thereby weaken enrollments. BGS advocates counter that many FTEs would not be enrolled at all were it not for that program.

A fourth kind of resistance is common to all innovations: discomfort with the unknown (Watson, 1966). Faculty, administrators and students know their way around the current practices, perhaps too well. Mentoring seems to be a very complex and demanding role to faculty who have done mostly classroom teaching - and it is. Only 12% of Empire State's faculty had prior experience in nontraditional teaching, but Bradley's paper suggests they're getting the hang of it. Administering all those programs and supervising faculty under contract conditions certainly will worry administrators. And all that personal responsibility for developing and carrying out one's own learning can be pretty disconcerting to students. A problem now being tackled by special task forces at Empire State is how to attract and help students who are less sure of their objectives and less ready for independent learning than most ESC students seem to be.

Fifth is the matter of time. For persons already swamped, the time required to develop a new program is not an exciting prospect. Much time is needed to learn how to function in the mentor role, to meet all those students individually, to prepare for what seem to be thirty different courses, to write up and review evaluations. Faculty at Empire State have found that the work load demands of this kind of education are formidable indeed.

Finally, there is the matter of rewards. Most teaching innovations do not pay. The faculty member is distracted from the scholarly research and writing which do pay. Those who get satisfaction from classroom performance find no classrooms in which to perform. The department and institution also find it hard to develop the traditional prestige which attracts students and grants. The student worries that this degree will not mean as much as others in the eyes of graduate schools and employers. And it is hard to both personalize education and generate the FTEs necessary to get state bucks or keep tuition within decent bounds. Contract learning institutions are meeting a good many of these concerns fairly well, but the problem persists. Faculty at Empire State and Wilmington say it is hard to keep up in their field, let alone conduct productive research. Contract committee members at South Carolina get virtually no rewards except personal satisfaction for the additional time and skill they put into contacts with BGS students. The excitement of a new and meaningful innovation can sustain enthusiasts for a while, but then...

Worry over costs, over quality and acceptability, enrollment threats to other units, the difficulty of learning new ways, time pressures, lack of rewards: these obstacles at least, plus a strong dose of organizational inertia, will stand in the way of your attempt to implement contract learning. It is a wonder such an innovation exists anywhere. Yet it does. It is worth studying the strategies used in these places to reduce resistance, increase support, and eventually launch working programs.

Strategies for Implementing Contract Learning

At each institution with which I am familiar, the first step was for some concerned authority to establish a committee. Nothing surprising in that.

Composition of the committees appeared to favor persons with strong interest in individualizing learning and with some expertise or experience in that concern. These groups studied the local situation; considered research, theory, and practices elsewhere; and formulated proposals for change. Again, that is pretty standard procedure. The groups did seem better connected to external knowledge resources than many committees are. The South Carolina group had an experienced University Without Walls leader, Warren Buford, on the committee and was most impressed by Bachelor of General Studies programs at the University of Iowa and the University of Michigan. Alabama's committee was regularly advised by New College's eventual dean, Neal Berte, who at the time was at a contract learning college, Ottawa University. On the group designing Empire State was its first Academic Vice President, Arthur Chickering, who was experienced in the personalized program of Goddard College. Wilmington College benefited from interaction with Chickering, Goddard's founder Royce Pitkin, and a visit to Ottawa by the College's ombudsman, Philip Young, who later became Director of Individualized Educational Planning. So though each group was building a program uniquely fitted to local conditions, there was little hesitancy about benefiting from the experiences and expertise of others. The wheel was more adapted and modified than reinvented.

It is one thing for a committee to sock itself away, become knowledgeable about a subject, and generate a proposal. It is quite another for anyone else to buy that notion. At the two institutions with which I am most familiar, South Carolina and Wilmington, it took some doing to reduce resistance, particularly among faculty. The South Carolina committee was a presidentially formed, ad hoc group. It and a previous committee of associate deans spent the year of 1970-71 developing a proposal. President Jones, criticized previously for innovating by decree, avoided that problem by sending the committee's proposal to the

Faculty Senate's Committee on Curricula and New Courses (CCNC). That body was chaired by a political scientist who expressed little interest in the low-achieving students or the nontraditional experimentation addressed by the proposal. But in keeping with the proposal's recommendation that an experimental college be created to house the BGS, as well as other experimental programs, CCNC placed a strong program for disadvantaged students, called Opportunity Scholars, a semester-long independent study program called Contemporary University, and the very controversial University Without Walls all under the same structural umbrella - without consulting the leaders of these programs. Well, no other experimental program wanted to be associated with UWW, and many faculty were suspicious that a large unit competitive with their departments was being formed, probably by the president. Those concerns, plus questions about the academic respectability of BGS itself, spelled doom for the proposal. After consultation with Strategies for Change and Knowledge Utilization staff, an associate professor of psychology quickly rallied support in the Faculty Senate for a tabling motion in the October 1971 Faculty Senate meeting. It passed. During the next five months, this person and a few close associates who had become concerned about undergraduate education during the Kent State-Jackson State-Cambodia disasters organized a "Tuesday night discussion group" with prominent Senators to develop an alternative proposal and to inform faculty about the worthiness of a modified version of the original proposal. This nonsactioned group did irritate CNCC members, but through the initiative of the president and firm support for the BGS by the provost, the BGS part of the proposal (not the experimental college part) finally passed after three years of development and politicking. Persons reflecting back felt that the low visibility but consistent aid of the president,

strong backing by the more academically conservative provost, and senator-to-senator persuasion by the informal advocacy group saved the day. That supports Mahan's (1973) finding that both executive initiative and widespread faculty involvement is necessary to bring about innovation. It also supports Rodgers and Shoemaker's contention that personal interaction which moves from innovators to open opinion leaders to their reference groups, as the Tuesday night group did, is important to innovation adoption.

Wilmington took a different route to contract learning. The contract notion and a degree without specific requirements was proposed to faculty by a standing committee, the Educational Policies Council, in the spring of 1972, but the faculty did not take action. The summer lull and the fall's new issues put these ideas on the shelf. Meanwhile, the president and provost wrote position papers on the future of the College. Their notion was that such papers might catalyze faculty action to resolve a serious problem in attracting adequate enrollment. These papers were circulated and discussed in division meetings. Faculty were irritated with what they took to be indications in those papers that the College's enrollment difficulties were the fault of unattractively traditional departmental offerings and that innovations emphasizing applied programs were needed. Admissions and public relations were more at fault, some faculty said, for not publicizing the academic strengths of the College (which, we found, were quite genuine).

Another executive strategy for clarifying future needs was use of the Institutional Goals Inventory and Strategies for Change survey data in a faculty retreat and workshop. That did stimulate talk about the need to strengthen intellectual and personal development of students, but still no action. Then the

ombudsman returned from Ottawa to share the approach of that president, Peter Armacost. Instead of alarming faculty about the future and pushing certain changes, Armacost turned assessment of the problem and development of solutions over to the faculty and scraped up institutional monies to support their work. He transferred ownership of the change process to them. The president and provost of Wilmington therefore decided to host a series of "mini-retreats" for sets of a dozen faculty from different departments, plus themselves. The purpose would be to generate a plan for the future which faculty and trustees could adopt by consensus, the decision norm in that Quaker college. On the last day of March, 1973, just such a decision was reached to implement the contract and open degree ideas proposed the year before. Again, those reflecting back saw the combination of slow personal persuasion across departmental lines, steadfast support and initiative by executive administration but faculty ownership (as the Faculty Senate had at South Carolina), considerable data feedback and discussion, and a core of diligent advocates led by the ombudsman and several members of EPC as key factors.

Certainly at the University of Alabama, this support at the top, involvement below, and persistent advocacy could be cited as key to successful reduction of resistance. And the quiet but determined initiative and support of Chancellor Ernest Boyer has permitted Empire State's advocates to launch that major experiment. Ownership of the problem-solving process by the group which would have to implement the change, so important at Wilmington, is another strategy well-supported by a body of change theory (Watson, 1966).

Change models, like the governance process, tend to stop at the decision to implement an innovation. We're over the hump. It's downhill now. But, of

course, it is not downhill. The decision may represent genuine commitment by only a few. Skills, understanding of objectives, facilities, time, leadership, rewards, early evaluation and feedback to work out the bugs and convince the skeptics: all these are yet to come. (Gross, Giaquinta, and Bernstein, 1973)

At Empire State and New College, Alabama, leadership of implementation was placed in the hands of persons who had a firm conceptual and experiential grasp on the contract learning notion - Berte and Chickering. Berte immediately began not only recruiting resources but also moving about the University of Alabama campus and the community to quietly explain New College to faculty, administrators and students who might have reason to resist the innovation. At Empire State, while Chickering and provost Loren Baritz began recruiting faculty and staff and getting the program launched, the president, James Hall, who had been on the Central Administration staff, began the same quiet process of building relationships with SUNY Central and concerned groups around the state. As Berte explains, the concern was to avoid becoming an isolated enclave about which rumors rather than understanding would grow. None of these programs could survive without support from its external environment, and, once again, interpersonal contact was the principle means of gaining that support.

Just as it is difficult to get a program approved without strongly involving concerned groups, so is implementation difficult unless implementing faculty feel meaningfully involved in program development. At New College, collaborative decision-making is the governance model sought. At Empire State, a faculty Senate system was quickly developed, and although faculty still report feeling left out of some major decisions and are unhappy with the amount of time the committee system takes, collaborative decision-making is increasingly the governance procedure.

Another form of support is money. New College, Wilmington, and Empire State all launched contract learning in part with sizeable foundation grants. That certainly suggests that there is money available for promising programs. It also suggests that interpersonal relationships with leaders of grant-giving agencies (and legislators or donors) are most important. A key strategy, however, was to move personnel and other ongoing resources from soft to hard money as soon as possible so that when the grant runs out, the institution is not left with a burden it cannot or will not bear.

In each institution, an advisory committee was established, apparently for four reasons: (1) to watchdog the program; (2) to advise its leaders; (3) to strengthen contact between the innovation and the wider community, and (4) to involve outsiders in order to avoid building that enclave. People knowledgeable about contract learning and/or deemed wise judges by external faculty were sought at South Carolina and Wilmington, the two cases with which I am familiar.

A strategy employed at South Carolina is well worth mentioning. Some influential faculty and administration were most suspicious of the likely quality of this program. It was intended in part for students with weak performance records. It was housed in the College of General Studies which was known for coordinating night school and a two-year degree program, not for baccalaureate quality. It would be run by a blunt-speaking dean whose scholarly orientation faculty in other colleges questioned. And it could mean a potential drain on departmental enrollments. To counter this uneasiness, the dean and his staff decided to take a low, conservative profile. The BGS was not widely publicized. Staff carefully recruited a small initial group. Close track was kept of their academic performance, which turned out to be excellent. The program has steadily

grown, for there is no dearth of applications, but it remains today a quiet alternative.

Empire State also began quietly. Rhetoric critical of traditional education was avoided. The new program was to supplement, not supplant, those given by existing institutions. It was to serve a new constituency unable to take advantage of existing opportunities rather than compete for the same kinds of students. Indeed, its enrollment fits that nontraditional pattern. It stressed academic quality translatable into traditional terms. And a large-scale research project was initiated in order to systematically measure the educational effectiveness and related costs of the program. Early evidence of student experiences, satisfactions and success after graduation were supportive of the contract learning approach and were much appreciated by the Middle States and New York State accrediting teams. They also have been fed to administrative offices and self-study or planning groups in order to spot early problems.

Leadership, strong relations with sources of external support or resistance, and careful evaluation to meet the concerns of critics all are important. But the heart of contract learning is the contract relationship between faculty member and student. At Empire State, the primary means for insuring a productive relationship has been recruitment of faculty who are committed to the idea and who have experiences which might relate to the advising, tutoring, resource linking, coordinating, evaluating tasks of each mentor.

At ESC short orientations were held but no ongoing faculty development occurred during the first three years of the institution. At New College, faculty development is given attention by building upon regular student evaluations of faculty. At South Carolina, faculty members of the three-person contract committee were assigned by their deans or department chairpersons. Initially this process

was hit or miss, but mostly miss. I interviewed a random half of these faculty participants in 1973 and learned that many knew almost nothing about BGS when assigned, received only a brief orientation from the program administration, hardly ever met as a full team because of scheduling problems, and in some cases had not laid eyes on their student advisees. There was no development program to train them in the complex educational process of developing with a student a degree program which suits the student's needs, interests, and style. Over the last two years, a cadre of informed, experienced and interested faculty has been developed, but there still is no training available. At Wilmington, the three-faculty/one student committees also are proving logistically unwieldy, though the committees which do get together at both institutions find the experience and the resulting student contracts most promising. No formal faculty development program is available yet at Wilmington.

Empire State's new Center for the Improvement of Individualized Education should help remedy this problem. A major objective is to build faculty development procedures and opportunities for persons involved in programs which have mentor and contract interactions. An early project will be to gather together mentors from various institutions in order to clarify the mentoring role and develop ways to learn how to do it better.

Innovations, if they survive, quickly become part of the status quo. Their procedures stabilize, their initial members socialize new ones into the way things are done around here, a "saga," as Burton Clark calls it, develops and must be upheld. If the innovation is a sub-unit of a larger institution, as is the case in all four of these institutions, its founders have the notion that eventually it will expand or infuse into the larger community; but it is more likely to settle into its corner of the campus or system. Two questions arise.

How can the things which work here be disseminated more widely? How can the program itself continuously renew?

There is not much evidence that Empire State has influenced educational process in the rest of the SUNY system yet, although the College has drawn considerable national attention. Berte reports, however, that New College is having impact on the rest of the University of Alabama, particularly through its professors. They are borrowed from departments and, when they return to those groups, take their innovative ways back with them. Once again, close interaction and overlapping membership help spread the innovation. A task force at Empire State is proposing that mentors be formally aligned with nearby SUNY or CUNY departments, not only so that they can enjoy the stimulation of colleagues in their own fields but so that bridges to spread Empire State's methods can be built.

As for renewal, Empire State recently launched a broadly participative planning project, the President's Committee on College Development. Early task force reports stress a commitment both to refine current programs and to move into new populations and new approaches so that the College's goal of serving diverse student needs can be met. Empire State also has established what is essentially an insitutional renewal wing: the Center for Improving Individualized Education, the Office of Research and Evaluation, and the officers for Policy Analysis and Evaluation. Such services are as nontraditional as the College, and require support. But innovation and renewal did not come intially without substantial investment in time and resources. There is no evidence to suggest that the next needed change will come any more cheaply than the first.

A final implementation problem worth serious attention is work load and rewards. Faculty members at Empire State report that all the things required of

them by the necessity of building and maintaining personalized learning experiences for a steady influx of students stretches endurance. On top of that is added the considerable time it takes to help develop the program and College in general. Their own professional scholarship suffers. Although most are not worried about carrier opportunities for mentors, and the promotion-tenure reward system is focused on that activity, they are concerned to maintain and improve their command of their fields. At South Carolina and Wilmington, serving on contract committees essentially is time not spent on activities which departments and the profession reward. This innovation, like most, is extremely demanding and nontraditional in its functions. Without time to meet the demands and rewards which suit the functions, implementors soon may lose enthusiasm for the enterprise.

Summary Strategies

Several strategies for implementing contract learning are suggested by the four cases described above.

1. Get a committee launched to study local goals and needs and to adapt contract learning (if that is the solution which fits) to those conditions. Include persons knowledgeable about contract learning and the local situation as well as persons respected by those who must support an eventual proposal.
2. Connect the group and concerned outsiders to evidence about local conditions and to external knowledge resources - consultants from contract learning institutions, reports such as those by Bradley, Debus, Lehmann and Berte. Evidence particularly worth gathering would pertain to costs, quality and acceptance, difficulty, time and rewards.

3. Seek and sustain support at the top of the institution but broadly involve faculty so that they own the problem-solving process, and try to maintain a core of persistent advocates.
4. Persuade persons whose support is needed by personal interaction, quiet diplomacy, which moves from innovators to opinion leaders to various reference groups. Don't stop when approval is given, for that is only one hurdle.
5. Collaborate across interest groups and develop advisory groups which link the innovation to sources of external advice and concern. Involve implementing faculty in developing the program as soon as possible.
6. Seek external funding to get things rolling, but switch to stable internal support as quickly as possible.
7. Recruit leaders and faculty who understand the program, are committed to its objectives and methods, and have appropriate background for the advising, tutoring, coordinating, collaborative evaluating, and learning resource linkage skills needed.
8. Carefully evaluate contract learning experiences, outcomes, and related costs both to aid external judges (accreditors, funding groups, governance bodies) and to spot implementation problems before they become insurmountable.
9. Provide orientation and professional development opportunities for those who must assume the complex new roles involved in contract learning.
10. Provide reasonable work load (not a greater burden than traditional approaches) and suitable rewards for mentoring functions.

11. If the innovation should be disseminated, set up mechanisms to do that. Allow time, expertise, and rewards for external interaction, for conference reporting, for applying the innovation in other places.

12. Establish renewal units such as planning committees, research offices, faculty development centers, policy analysis and planning officers. Everyone else will quickly get buried in business as usual.

That is hardly a complete list. But I think that both change research and the cases herein support the importance of these strategies. If you add these approaches to the wisdom of your own hard knocks, contract learning or another worthy innovation to personalize higher education should come to pass in your institution.

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